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OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Application of	:	
Barton, et al.	:	
Application No. 07/827,906	:	DECISION
Filing Date: 7 August, 1989	:	
Attorney Docket No.: 1122990199	:	

This is a decision on the petition filed on 27 July, 2006, alleging unintentional delay under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b).

The Office regrets the delay in addressing this matter, however, it is noted that the decision as set forth below in this matter was written, signed and sent for mailing in 2006, and apparently never mailed by the Office.¹

For the reasons set forth below the petition as considered under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) is **DISMISSED**.

While Petitioner refers extensively to the provisions of 37 C.F.R. §1.137 and the commentary at MPEP §711.03(c), Petitioner appears not to comply with those references.

¹ **NOTE:** Monitoring of the status of applications on PAIR can inform one's management of application responses and provide an indication when mailings of Office actions should be expected. Status Inquiries filed at three (3) or four (4) month intervals provide a demonstration of diligence and attention in supporting a petition seeking relief under 37 C.F.R. §1.181.

It appears that Petitioner herein may not have been empowered to prosecute the instant application. If Petitioner desires to receive future correspondence regarding this application, the appropriate power of attorney documentation must be submitted. A courtesy copy of this decision will be mailed to Petitioner. However, all future correspondence will be directed to the address of record until such time as appropriate instructions are received to the contrary.

If, indeed, Petitioner was not of record at the time the instant application went abandoned and so cannot make the statement of unintentional delay required by the regulations. Petitioner must clarify this matter, and, if he was not in fact of record he must have the appropriate authority (then-Counsel of Record or proper officer of assignee with supporting certificate under 37 C.F.R. §3.73(b)) make the required statement/showing.

- (1) Any petition (and fee) for reconsideration of this decision must be submitted within two (2) months from the mail date of this decision. Extensions of time under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a) are permitted. The reconsideration request should include a cover letter entitled "Renewed Petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b)."
- (2) Thereafter, there will be no further reconsideration of this matter.

BACKGROUND

The record reflects that:

- Petitioner failed to reply timely and properly to the Decision of the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences (BPAI) mailed on 29 January, 2004, with reply due under the provisions of 35 U.S.C. §142 (or see also: MPEP §1214.07);
- Petitioner refers generally to certain post-BPAI decision events, but presents no specification as to dates and transactions with copies of date-stamped documents in support of such calendar of event, nor does Petitioner provide any statement and supporting documentation evidencing compliance with 37 C.F.R. §41.205;
- it would appear that the application went abandoned by operation of law after midnight 29 March, 2004, however, as indicated above, in the absence of statements and documents in support thereof to be provided by Petitioner, the date in question cannot be determined as of this writing;
- the Office mailed the Notice of Abandonment on 8 May, 2006;

- the instant petition, filed with fee as indicated above on 27 July, 2006, and a preliminary amendment as the reply under 37 C.F.R. §1.129 and a terminal disclaimer and fee, refers to events without being specific and without documentation supporting the statements—thus the not only is it possible that Petitioner is not the proper party to make the statement of unintentional delay, but also at this writing there is no way of ascertaining the accuracy thereof.

Should Petitioner elect to renew his petition herein, Petitioner must provide from the proper representative (former Counsel of Record, assignee with supporting certificate) the statement of unintentional delay with documentary support for the averment that the entire delay from the due date of the reply (i.e., date of abandonment by operation of law until the filing of a grantable petition was unintentional (see: MPEP §711.03(c)) in compliance with the Rules of Practice—and Petitioner should satisfy himself that his reply is in compliance with current Rules of Practice.

Out of an abundance of caution, Petitioners always are reminded that the filing of a petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.181 does not toll any periods that may be running any action by the Office and a petition seeking relief under the regulation must be filed within two (2) months of the act complained of (see: 37 C.F.R. §1.181(f)), and those registered to practice *and* all others who make representations before the Office are reminded to inquire into the underlying facts of representations made to the Office and support averments with the appropriate documentation—since all owe to the Office the continuing duty to disclose.²

² See supplement of 17 June, 1999. The Patent and Trademark Office is relying on petitioner's duty of candor and good faith and accepting a statement made by Petitioner. See Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure, 62 Fed. Reg. at 53160 and 53178, 1203 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office at 88 and 103 (responses to comments 64 and 109)(applicant obligated under 37 C.F.R. §10.18 to inquire into the underlying facts and circumstances when providing statements to the Patent and Trademark Office).

Specifically, the regulations at 37 C.F.R. §10.18 provide:

§ 10.18 Signature and certificate for correspondence filed in the Patent and Trademark Office.

- (a) For all documents filed in the Office in patent, trademark, and other non-patent matters, except for correspondence that is required to be signed by the applicant or party, each piece of correspondence filed by a practitioner in the Patent and Trademark Office must bear a signature by such practitioner complying with the provisions of §1.4(d), §1.4(e), or § 2.193(c)(1) of this chapter.
- (b) By presenting to the Office (whether by signing, filing, submitting, or later advocating) any paper, the party presenting such paper, whether a practitioner or non-practitioner, is certifying that—

(1) All statements made therein of the party's own knowledge are true, all statements made therein on information and belief are believed to be true, and all statements made therein are made with the knowledge that whoever, in any matter within the jurisdiction of the Patent and Trademark Office, knowingly and willfully falsifies, conceals, or covers up by any trick, scheme, or device a material fact, or makes any false, fictitious or fraudulent statements or representations, or makes or uses any false writing or document knowing the same to contain any false, fictitious or fraudulent statement or entry, shall be subject to the penalties set forth under 18 U.S.C. 1001, and that violations of this paragraph may jeopardize the validity of the application or document, or the validity or enforceability of any patent, trademark registration, or certificate resulting therefrom; and

(2) To the best of the party's knowledge, information and belief, formed after an inquiry reasonable under the circumstances, that—
(i) The paper is not being presented for any improper purpose, such as to harass someone or to cause unnecessary delay or needless increase in the cost of prosecution before the Office;

(ii) The claims and other legal contentions therein are warranted by existing law or by a nonfrivolous argument for the extension, modification, or reversal of existing law or the establishment of new law;

(iii) The allegations and other factual contentions have evidentiary support or, if specifically so identified, are likely to have evidentiary support after a reasonable opportunity for further investigation or discovery; and

STATUTES, REGULATIONS AND ANALYSIS

Congress has authorized the Commissioner to "revive an application if the delay is shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner to have been "unavoidable." 35 U.S.C. §133 (1994).³

The regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) and (b) set forth the requirements for a petitioner to revive a previously unavoidably or unintentionally, respectively, abandoned application under this congressional grant of authority. The language of 35 U.S.C. §133 and 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) is clear, unambiguous, and without qualification: the delay in tendering the reply to the outstanding Office action, as well as filing the first petition seeking revival, must have been unavoidable for the reply now to be accepted on petition.⁴

Delays in responding properly raise the question whether delays are unavoidable.⁵ Where there is a question whether the delay was unavoidable, Petitioners must meet the burden of establishing that the delay was unavoidable within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §133 and 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a).⁶ And the Petitioner must be diligent in attending to the matter.⁷ Failure to do so does not

(iv) The denials of factual contentions are warranted on the evidence, or if specifically so identified, are reasonably based on a lack of information or belief.

(c) Violations of paragraph (b)(1) of this section by a practitioner or non-practitioner may jeopardize the validity of the application or document, or the validity or enforceability of any patent, trademark registration, or certificate resulting therefrom. Violations of any of paragraphs (b)(2)(i) through (iv) of this section are, after notice and reasonable opportunity to respond, subject to such sanctions as deemed appropriate by the Commissioner, or the Commissioner's designee, which may include, but are not limited to, any combination of —

- (1) Holding certain facts to have been established;
- (2) Returning papers;
- (3) Precluding a party from filing a paper, or presenting or contesting an issue;
- (4) Imposing a monetary sanction;
- (5) Requiring a terminal disclaimer for the period of the delay; or
- (6) Terminating the proceedings in the Patent and Trademark Office.

(d) Any practitioner violating the provisions of this section may also be subject to disciplinary action. See § 10.23(c)(15).

[Added 50 FR 5175, Feb. 6, 1985, effective Mar. 8, 1985; para. (a) revised, 58 FR 54494, Oct. 22, 1993, effective Nov. 22, 1993; paras. (a) & (b) revised, paras. (c) & (d) added, 62 FR 53131, Oct. 10, 1997, effective Dec. 1, 1997; para. (a) revised, 69 FR 56481, Sept. 21, 2004, effective Oct. 21, 2004]

³ 35 U.S.C. §133 provides:

35 U.S.C. §133 Time for prosecuting application.

Upon failure of the applicant to prosecute the application within six months after any action therein, of which notice has been given or mailed to the applicant, or within such shorter time, not less than thirty days, as fixed by the Commissioner in such action, the application shall be regarded as abandoned by the parties thereto, unless it be shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that such delay was unavoidable.

⁴ Therefore, by example, an unavoidable delay in the payment of the Filing Fee might occur if a reply is shipped by the US Postal Service, but due to catastrophic accident, the delivery is not made.

⁵ See: *Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure; Final Rule Notice*, 62 Fed. Reg. at 53158-59 (October 10, 1997), 1203 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office at 86-87 (October 21, 1997).

⁶ See: *In re Application of G.* 11 USPQ2d 1378, 1380 (Comm'r Pats. 1989).

⁷ See: *Diligence in Filing Petitions to Revive and Petitions to Withdraw the Holding of Abandonment*, 1124 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office 33 (March 19, 1991). It was and is Petitioner's burden to exercise diligence in seeking either to have the holding of abandonment withdrawn or the application revived. See 1124 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office *supra*.

constitute the care required under Pratt, and so cannot satisfy the test for diligence and due care.

(By contrast, unintentional delays are those that do not satisfy the very strict statutory and regulatory requirements of unavoidable delay, and also, by definition, are not intentional.⁸)

Allegations as to
Unintentional Delay

The requirements for a grantable petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) are the petition and fee, a statement/showing of unintentional delay, a proper reply, and—where appropriate--a terminal disclaimer and fee.

The record indicates that Petitioner did not timely reply to the 2004 BPAI decision, however, the determination as to the date of abandonment is at this writing unclear. Petitioner further appears as of this writing neither to have made the showing of unintentional delay and/or to have provided a statement/showing of unintentional delay by one in authority and/or knowledgeable at the time the application went abandoned. Thus Petitioner has not, as of this writing, satisfied the statement/showing requirement under the regulation—and Petitioner should satisfy himself that his reply is in compliance with current Rules of Practice.

CONCLUSION

The petition as considered under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(b) is **dismissed**.

Further correspondence with respect to this matter should be addressed as follows:⁹

By mail: Commissioner for Patents¹⁰
 P.O. Box 1450
 Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

⁸ Therefore, by example, an unintentional delay in the reply might occur if the reply and transmittal form are to be prepared for shipment by the US Postal Service, but other pressing matters distract one's attention and the mail is not timely deposited for shipment.

⁹ On July 15, 2005, the Central Facsimile (FAX) Number changed to (571) 273-8300. The number (571) 273-8300 is be the only facsimile number recognized for centralized delivery. (For further information, see: <http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/pac/dapp/ola/preognote/cfax062005.pdf>.)

¹⁰ To determine the appropriate addresses for other subject-specific correspondence, refer to the USPTO Web site at www.uspto.gov.

By FAX: IFW Formal Filings
(571) 273-8300
ATTN.: Office of Petitions

By hand: Mail Stop: Petition
Customer Service Window
Randolph Building
401 Dulany Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

While telephone inquiries regarding this decision may be directed to the undersigned at (571) 272-3214, it is noted that all practice before the Office is in writing (see: 37 C.F.R. §1.2¹¹) and the proper authority for action on any matter in this regard are the statutes (35 U.S.C.), regulations (37 C.F.R.) and the commentary on policy (MPEP). Therefore, no telephone discussion may be controlling or considered authority for Petitioner's action(s).



John J. Gillon, Jr.
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cc:

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ST. LOUIS, MO 63167

¹¹ The regulations at 37 C.F.R. §1.2 provide:

§1.2 Business to be transacted in writing.

All business with the Patent and Trademark Office should be transacted in writing. The personal attendance of applicants or their attorneys or agents at the Patent and Trademark Office is unnecessary. The action of the Patent and Trademark Office will be based exclusively on the written record in the Office. No attention will be paid to any alleged oral promise, stipulation, or understanding in relation to which there is disagreement or doubt.